

EDINA PARK BOARD
7:00 P.M.
EDINA ART CENTER
APRIL 10, 2001

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Damman, Floyd Grabiell, David Fredlund, George Klus,
Karla Sitek, Ardis Wexler, Tom White, Andy Finsness, John
Murrin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Linda Presthus

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton, Diana Hedges

I. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 13, 2001 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Floyd Grabiell MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 13, 2001 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Dave Fredlund SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. TOUR OF THE EDINA ART CENTER & PRESENTATION - DIANA HEDGES, ART CENTER DIRECTOR

Diana Hedges, Art Center Director, indicated that she started working for the Edina Art Center 15 years ago. She noted that when she first started there were approximately 1,200 students and today they are at over 7,000 and added that they have become both state as well as nationally known. Ms. Hedges pointed out that they also have had and continue to have instructors from all over the world come and teach at the Edina Art Center. She indicated that they will be getting an instructor from China in a few weeks. Ms. Hedges stated that they have also broadened their offerings and they do offer tie dye, paper making and flower arranging, however, their focus is mainly on fine arts.

Ms. Hedges informed the Park Board that a few years back they had a cancellation rate of about 40% to 50% and now their cancellation rate is 3%. She noted that pottery has been their biggest growth area and that is why they are proposing to build an addition on the west side of the building to hopefully bring in more revenue in renting out studios. Ms. Hedges explained that after doing research at various art facilities she found there are waiting lists for people to rent studio space. She noted that she feels they could bring in a lot of people.

Ms. Hedges explained that they have been doing a lot more outreach exhibits. Currently at Jerry's Café is Bradley Benn's, Edina Art Center Assistant Director, exhibit of clay

fish. She noted that they switch their exhibits every three to four months. Also, they have outreach exhibits at the Opus building, Northland and the library on 50th Street. Ms. Hedges indicated that they are currently working on getting an exhibit set up with 10 to 12 prints that Art Dickey made. Mr. Dickey was an Art Center Board member who recently passed away.

Mr. Keprios explained that the Art Center Board reports directly to the City Council and are not subordinate to the Park Board. He noted that the Art Center Board meets once a month and has 11 members, however, they currently have ten and are looking for a new member. It was noted that Jim Van Valkenburg is the Chairman of the Art Center Board.

The Park Board then went on a tour of the Art Center and thanked Ms. Hedges for her report.

III. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES REFERENDUM UPDATE - JOHN KEPRIOS

Mr. Klus commented that he has talked to some people who still think the dome is part of the referendum and noted that a lot of people are misinformed on what is happening. Mr. Keprios handed out an informational brochure on the referendum that will be mailed to all residents by the end of the week. He noted that the publicity piece clearly shows that there is no dome in the proposal. It outlines everything that is being proposed (who, what, why and where) as well as what the tax impact is. It also shows where people can vote and who to call to ask questions. Mr. Keprios commented that Jennifer Wilkinson, Communications Director, has done an outstanding job on the brochure.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he gave three presentations yesterday and two today. He commented that he is going to give a presentation to the athletic boosters tomorrow night. Also, there is going to be a very heavily attended presentation hosted by the League of Women Voters on April 30th at the Community Center. He explained that he will give his power point presentation and afterwards there will be a debate between the vote yes proponents and the vote no opponents. He indicated that this meeting will be publicized in the Sun Newspaper and that it will also be put video taped and played on cable television. He stated that there will likely be some very challenging questions.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that it has become real evident to him that a lot of the athletic association board members don't know anything about this and that really shocks him. Therefore, he is going to mail out a notice to all 209 youth athletic association board members inviting them to attend an informational presentation on the referendum followed by questions and answers. He noted that he has heard that some of these board members have actually been talking negatively about the referendum. He stated that these are the people who one would expect to be promoting the referendum. He wants to be sure that this group gets the opportunity to hear all the facts.

Mr. Murrin indicated that the "Vote Yes" committee has held a number of meetings and have been asking for contributions. He stated that he has contributed \$100.00 towards it

and asked if anyone would like to make a contribution he will be make sure it gets to the appropriate people. He noted that within the next few weeks the “Vote Yes” committee is planning on setting up tables and stands at functions around town. He commented that he feels that they are very well organized. Mr. Murrin indicated that he finds it interesting that there is such an active group that is opposed to the referendum. Mr. Murrin asked if anyone has a feeling on how the public is responding, whether it’s positive or negative. Mr. Grabiell indicated that all he has seen in the Sun Current has been negative to which it was noted that in today’s Sun Current everything was positive.

Mr. White explained that Linda Presthus asked him to hand out to the Park Board members a memo. He noted that Ms. Presthus is a co-chair of the “Vote Yes” committee. He stated that there are specific things she would like the Park Board members to do if they are willing. Mr. White noted that she would like everyone to fill out a “Vote Yes” card which authorizes them to use your name and say you are in support of the referendum. Also, if you could hand them out to nine other friends and neighbors of Edina and ask them to do the same thing. He noted that there is also an area to mark if you would be interested in having a lawn sign.

Ms. Sitek indicated that she has been hearing from people that it is their understanding that if any problems come up that money will be taken from the general fund and it’s going to take away from textbooks, teachers, etc. She asked Mr. Murrin if that is true to which Mr. Murrin replied that it is false. Mr. Murrin explained that the School District spends a certain amount for maintenance. He also noted that some of their buildings are in need of major improvements and will need to be done whether or not there is a referendum. He also stated that they will be able to support all of the uses. He added that this is a revenue producer for them at night and that they are not going to lose any money and will be able to pay for all of their expenses. Ms. Sitek indicated that that needs to be shouted out because that is not what people think. Mr. Murrin stated that this is unfortunate that people are making this an issue when it’s not an issue at all. Mr. Finsness asked if it’s not an issue then why is it happening. Mr. Murrin replied because it’s an easy target. People think that because we are absorbing more responsibilities we are taking away from the kids. However, we’ve done the math and we can pay for it all. Also, we would be saving on all sorts of improvements that have to get done regardless of the referendum.

Mr. Keprios indicated that same question came up after his power point presentation last night at the DFL District gathering and Peyton Robb’s response was identical to Mr. Murrin’s. Mr. Robb indicated that to keep it in perspective they anticipate they will generate roughly \$165,000 in revenue in fees and charges from both the pools and the gymnasiums. He noted that what is left over the school is going to absorb within its general operating budget, approximately \$48,000 to \$50,000. He also commented that with a 50 million dollar operating budget there is some leeway room and therefore it is not an issue.

Mr. Klus asked for an update on the Joint Powers Organization. Mr. Keprios replied that they just had their second meeting and they have interviewed five finalists out of 12 for the Construction Manager position and they hope to select a finalist on Friday. Everything is moving right along. Mr. Keprios also noted that the Facilities Use Agreement and the Joint Powers Agreement have been signed, delivered and approved by both elected bodies and is in place, legal and binding.

IV. OFF-LEASH DOG PARK STUDY AND PROPOSAL - GREG INGRAHAM, INGRAHAM & ASSOCIATES

Mr. Keprios explained that the City Council directed him to look at different areas within the city to determine if there is a reasonable site for an off-leash dog park and specifically Creek Valley Park. Mr. Keprios then introduced Greg Ingraham from Ingraham & Associates Consulting firm whom was commissioned to look at the potential sites for an off-leash dog park.

Mr. Ingraham indicated that he worked with city park and police staff to identify potential sites and came up with four areas. He pointed out that some of the criteria they looked for was size, access and visibility as well as flat areas. Mr. Ingraham explained that all four sites could work, however, all four were marginal at best and there was no one great site.

Mr. Ingraham noted that Creek Valley was one of the four sites they looked at and showed an aerial photo of the location and explained the site noting that it could work. However, the one thing it does lack is a flat area because it's fairly rolling. He added that Creek Valley does have a lot of uses in the summer and has primarily ice skating in the winter. He noted that the green marking outlined on the map is where the rink is located and it could cause a problem because dog parks are used 365 days a year which may make it hard to manage. However, the pink area marked would work fairly well.

Mr. Ingraham explained that the Walnut Ridge site from the physical aspect of the park land does work quite well and is probably the best site in terms of physical space. There is a large flat area that is not programmed for active recreation use and it has a loop trail around it. However, the drawbacks are it's a hard park to get to and it's a neighborhood park, not a community type of park.

Mr. Ingraham indicated that Van Valkenburg was another site that was looked at which is right by the ball field complex. He explained that the drawback to this site is there is not a lot of flat area. It would work but again it is a marginal site and lacks an open area.

Mr. Ingraham showed where the Braemar site could be located and noted that it would be by where the old gun range was. He indicated that he feels this could be a good site in the future if it was combined with an aesthetic upgrade of the public works facility and use the dog park as a sort of transition to the maintenance activities. Mr. Ingraham pointed out that this site is also being proposed for a regional police/fire training facility. He

noted that he doubts everything could be put on this one site and make it function. He noted that Braemar would certainly be an adequate area.

Mr. Ingraham indicated that all of the areas he mentioned do have parking areas and noted that there would be various fencing costs. He stated that on the whole scale of things dog parks are relatively cheap to develop and maintain and do work quite well. However, he did not see one site that he could say he thinks would be great. He noted he feels all of them would work and would get used because there is definitely a demand for it.

Mr. Grabiel asked how do these sites compare in size with the site Minneapolis wants to use to which Mr. Keprios replied that the Minneapolis site is a little over four acres and the sites mentioned tonight are 2.5 to 3 acres.

Mr. Klus asked why is there such a sudden interest in this and asked if they are trying to appease someone. Mr. Keprios replied that the City Council has directed him to look at the Creek Valley site specifically as well as all of Edina to see to see if it would be feasible to put in an off-leash dog park.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he did talk to the Chief of Police and Chief Siitari informed him that he would not be in favor of any of the sites mentioned for an off-leash dog park unless he was given additional resources to enforce it.

Mr. Ingraham commented that both the City of Bloomington and Ramsey County have an off-leash dog site and both have said that for the most part they are self-enforcing. He indicated that basically they only have to go there to empty the trash.

Mr. Damman asked if the City did decide to designate a place for an off-leash dog site would there be any legal ramifications to the City if a dog were to attack someone, etc. Mr. Ingraham replied that it's his understanding that it's no different than any other liability, he doesn't think it would heighten anything.

Ms. Wexler asked if this goes to the City Council is there recourse for the people in the community who simply do not want it at a particular site. Mr. Keprios responded that there would likely be a public hearing before it would actually be implemented.

Mr. Murrin indicated that he doesn't have a dog and he doesn't have a charitable feeling either way, however, Walnut Ridge seems to be an area that may have less human use and would be an acceptable site for an off-leash dog park. He noted that he thinks it would actually be a positive to the neighborhood and not a negative.

John Murrin MOVED THAT THE WALNUT RIDGE PARK BE DEVELOPED INTO AN OFF-LEASH DOG PARK.

Mr. Murrin commented that we should see if neighborhood problems prevail or if it becomes a cost issue for enforcement for the Edina Police Department. Mr. Murrin commented that he sees our function as a park board to be able to be innovative and at least get things to the table he would hate to see this thing just not be forwarded.

THE MOTION FAILED DUE TO A LACK OF A SECOND.

Floyd Grabiell MOVED THAT THE PARK BOARD RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL PROCEED WITH FURTHER INVESTIGATING THE FEASIBILITY OF THE DOG PARK AT EITHER THE CREEK VALLEY OR THE BRAEMAR SITE.

John Murrin SECONDED THE MOTION.

Ms. Sitek indicated that she would like to go back and look at the site that Minneapolis proposed. Mr. Klus noted that he agrees with Ms. Sitek, the best site is the Minneapolis site over by Weber Park. He indicated that we need the City Council to see that the site Minneapolis wants to use is the best area and it's the flattest area of all of the other sites presented tonight. Also, it is currently being used as an unofficial off-leash dog site. In addition, it is also going to get the least amount of friction from the community compared to the other sites mentioned. Mr. White stated that Minneapolis would also pay for the fencing and maintenance as well as putting in a parking lot. Therefore, it wouldn't become an expense to the City of Edina.

Mr. Grabiell indicated that he would like to speak in support of his motion. He noted that with the Braemar site and the Creek Valley site there are no neighbors to worry about. He stated that with Van Valkenburg and Walnut Ridge there are neighbors to worry about. Therefore, that is why he likes the Braemar and Creek Valley sites and really likes Braemar the best. He noted there are a lot of people within the City of Edina who have an interest in having an off-leash dog park. He stated that frankly he doesn't like the idea of the Minneapolis Park Board coming in and putting their park within the City of Edina limits. If we think in Edina we need an off-leash dog park than lets put one in Edina, on Edina park land where we can control what happens. If Minneapolis comes in even with a joint powers agreement we lose control and that is why he favors this and does not favor the Minneapolis site.

Mr. Klus commented that he thinks we would have just as much control on the Minneapolis site as we would on our own site. He noted that he felt after everything was debated that we were going to still be able to provide something to the residents of Edina and it was going to be fair and we were going to have control. Also, we were going to say that if it didn't work out we would ask them to move and we wouldn't allow it to go on.

Mr. Keprios asked is your motion to further study it to which Mr. Grabiell responded his motion was to recommend to the City Council that we proceed with an off-leash dog park site at either Braemar or Creek Valley, which would be just the pink area shown.

Mr. White asked all in favor of Floyd Grabiels motion to go forward with either the Creek Valley site or the Braemar site.

IN FAVOR: Floyd Grabiels, Andy Finsness, Ardis Wexler, John Murrin

OPPOSED: Dave Fredlund, George Klus, Karla Sitek, Tom White

ABSTAINED: Mike Damman

MOTION DID NOT PASS.

George Klus MOVED THAT WE ASK THE CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER THE OFF-LEASH DOG PARK AT THE PROPOSED MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC WORKS SITE ALONG FRANCE AVENUE.

Mr. Finsness asked if the City Council is aware of the Minneapolis proposed off-leash dog site to which Mr. Keprios replied that he believes that they are familiar with it.

Mr. White asked Mr. Klus if his motion then would be to direct Mr. Keprios to contact the Minneapolis Park Board again. Mr. Klus noted that he would say that his motion would say that we recommend to the City Council to consider only the France Avenue site at this time, which we have already evaluated.

Mr. Klus restated his motion to RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL THAT THE ONLY OFF-LEASH DOG PARK TO BE CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME BE THE FRANCE AVENUE SITE.

Karla Sitek SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Grabiels asked if the Police Chiefs opinion has changed where he doesnt want us to take on Minneapolis problems and be responsible. Mr. White noted that he cant believe his opinion has changed. Mr. Keprios noted that the Police Chief would support the Minneapolis Public Works site only if they meet the demands that have been stipulated. Mr. Klus noted that all we are doing is going back to the City Council to look at that. He noted that he is saying that is the one that we would rather see them look at.

All In Favor: George Klus, Karla Sitek, John Murrin, Dave Fredlund, Andy Finsness, Ardis Wexler, Tom White

Opposed: Floyd Grabiels

Abstain: Mike Damman

V. POLICE & FIRE TRAINING FACILITY, BRAEMAR PARK SITE – PARK BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR. TOM WHITE

Mr. White explained that there used to be a gun range at Braemar Park by the arena that was torn down about six years ago. Since then it has been proposed to be used for a police/fire training facility for the surrounding municipalities. Mr. White indicated that when you look at all of the other surrounding communities such as Eden Prairie and Eagan they have a lot more open space than Edina. Therefore, he would like to see a recommendation be made to the City Council that a police/fire training facility be located in another city and that we use that land for Edina residents. Mr. Keprios pointed out that Edina has just been awarded \$500,000, after all of these years, to go ahead with the facility. It is now just a matter of getting the final approval of all other municipalities and the Metropolitan Airport Commission.

Mr. Murrin asked if the City would be getting a lot of money for having the facility put on Edina property. Mr. Keprios responded that the Edina Police and Fire Departments would save money in the long run because they wouldn't have to travel outside the city limits for their training. Other than that the Park Department would not receive any money from this facility. Mr. Murrin noted that if that's the case he would vote against having the facility. Mr. Grabiell asked if the Park Department would receive any fees generated to which Mr. Keprios replied no.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he would like to have had this discussion a long time ago. Mr. White commented that for the record he has been talking about this since he became a Park Board member four years ago. Mr. Keprios indicated that at this point in time he cannot recommend that we not follow through with the training facility at this site.

John Murrin MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL THAT WE ADAMANTLY DECLINE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A POLICE/FIRE TRAINING FACILITY AT BRAEMAR AND THAT IT BE MOVED TO A DIFFERENT MUNICIPALITY THAT HAS MORE OPEN SPACE. Floyd Grabiell SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Keprios noted that if this is to go forward as a police and fire training facility then perhaps the recommendation should also state something about it being open and available to the public at certain times. Mr. White stated that he doesn't want a gun range of any type at Braemar. He indicated that if the City Council ends up putting in a training facility at Braemar then Mr. Keprios can make a recommendation to the City Council at that time.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. PRIORITY USE OF EDINA' SCHEDULED OUTDOOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Mr. Keprios explained that after last month's Park Board meeting he took all of the recommendations and comments and put together a new draft. He noted that the Park Board made some excellent suggestions for changes. He indicated that Mr. MacHolda has sent out this current draft along with a memo to the athletic associations so they can look it over. The memo also invites all youth athletic association presidents to the May Park Board meeting to discuss the proposal, as well as, take advantage of the opportunity to discuss any other current youth athletic program related issues. Mr. White indicated that if anyone has any other suggestions to give Mr. Keprios a call. Mr. Keprios pointed out that the only facilities they are talking about are the scheduled outdoor facilities because there is so much demand for them.

Mr. Grabiell indicated that he is still not so sure about priority #7 and he will have to give it some more thought. Mr. White indicated that Mr. Keprios was going to talk to the City Attorney about priority #7. It was asked if that should be taken off completely. Mr. White suggested making it more content neutral to which Mr. Grabiell suggested taking priority #7 out and making priority #8 now priority #7.

VII. EDINBOROUGH PARK USE STUDY

Mr. Keprios explained that his staff conducted a survey on their own for Edinborough Park customers. The results indicated that the majority of their use is by non-residents. He noted that people are willing to pay a fee to use the park and therefore they are looking at some ideas to capture some revenues. He stated that they are going to need an additional revenue source within the not to distant future to stay financially solvent. He added that they are still not on a break-even basis. The trust fund that keeps bailing them out is going to last several more years, however, when that's gone they will have nothing to fall back on other than the City's general budget. Mr. Klus asked Mr. Keprios what user fees are not being collected right now that he could see collecting in the future. Mr. Keprios replied that the entire great hall and grotto area is free and is heavily used especially during the winter months. He noted that kids come in by the busloads from daycare centers and take over the great hall at no charge.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that the little skating rink area is a major operating expense for Edinborough Park. He noted that when it gets to the point where it needs to be redone or upgraded perhaps they will look at putting in a large play structure in place of the indoor ice rink. The currently play structure is way too small for the amount of kids that play on it. The structure does not meet current safety standards and the area is not accessible. This is something that we will probably need to look at in the near future.

VIII. OTHER

A. Centennial Lakes Skating Rink - Mr. Keprios pointed out that at Centennial Lakes this past winter they had less skaters but made more money. He noted that the increase in fees, skate rentals and sled rentals is probably what lead to the significant change in

dollars. Mr. Keprios noted that Centennial Lakes is still the greatest area for outdoor recreational skating in the Twin Cities area if not the whole state.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Floyd Grabiell MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:50 P.M. John Murrin SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.